

(b) selecting from said supply one or more biological samples that contain a detectable polynucleotide comprising a contiguous sequence of at least 15 nucleotides fully complementary to either strand of Figure 3.

116. (New) A method of preparing biological samples from human individuals prior to use in order to prevent transmission of hepatitis C virus (HCV), said method comprising:

- (a) providing a supply of human biological samples; and
- (b) selecting from said supply one or more biological samples that contain a detectable polynucleotide comprising a contiguous sequence of at least 15 nucleotides fully complementary to either strand of Figure 62A.

117. (New) A method of preparing biological samples from human individuals prior to use in order to prevent transmission of hepatitis C virus (HCV), said method comprising:

- (a) providing a supply of human biological samples; and
- (c) selecting from said supply one or more biological samples that contain a detectable polynucleotide comprising a contiguous sequence of at least 15 nucleotides fully complementary to either strand of Figure 89.

#### REMARKS

The present Preliminary Amendment is responsive to the request for Removing the Finality of the Office Action pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.129(a) mailed November 17, 2000. New claims 115-117 are added. Claims 88-104 and 106-117 are now pending in view of the above amendments. Support for the newly added claims can be found in Figures 3, 62, 62A and 89 and their corresponding descriptions. Preparation, isolation and sequencing of the individual HCV cDNA clones and the composite sequences derived from them are disclosed in section IV.A of the Specification. No new matter is added. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments to the claims.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for